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President: Ms. Mejía Vélez (Vice-President) ..... (Colombia)

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme (E/2014/14, E/2014/34/Rev.1, E/2014/35, E/2015/36 and E/2015/47)

Dialogue with the executive heads of the United Nations funds and programmes

1. **The President** said that the dialogue with the executive heads of the United Nations funds and programmes, on the topic "Fit for purpose in the post-2015 era — which quadrennial comprehensive policy review-mandated actions require accelerated and/or scaled-up implementation if the United Nations development system is to be ready for the challenges of the post-2015 development agenda?" had a twofold objective: to take stock of progress in the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system; and to hear the perspectives of the executive heads of the funds and programmes on the core issues of the system's longer-term positioning, coherence, coordination and integration in the face of the growing diversity of countries' needs, capacities and priorities.

2. **Ms. Clark** (Chair, United Nations Development Group (UNDG); and Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), panellist, responding to the first discussion question for the dialogue, regarding the opportunities and challenges that the integration requirements of the post-2015 development agenda posed if the Organization was to remain fit for purpose in the new era, said that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had been vital in rallying the world to join the fight against poverty. The preparation of over 400 national MDG reports, with the support of the United Nations development system, had contributed both to in-country development dialogues and ownership and to global knowledge sharing. Current development challenges were complex and interconnected, and finding sustainable solutions required integrated responses. Synergies should therefore be sought among the outcomes of the major conferences and summits that would be held in 2015 on disaster risk reduction, financing for development, sustainable development and climate change. Addressing poverty and vulnerabilities and building resilience required Governments to work across ministries and sectors and within broader partnerships. The United Nations development system must similarly be prepared to work collaboratively in support of countries' sustainable development plans and to adopt a truly system-wide approach at all levels. The standard operating procedures of the new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), which were gearing up to support countries to deliver on sustainable development goals, would build on the system's existing experience with "Delivering as one" and the positive outcomes of that approach, which included less duplication of efforts and better alignment of the assistance frameworks with national planning cycles.

3. In considering which mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review required accelerated or scaled-up implementation, it was apparent that, once fully implemented, that review would take the United Nations development system a long way towards being fit for purpose to deliver on the post-2015 agenda. First, however, reforms must be completed at the headquarters level to support common business operations, results management and reporting. Significant cost savings were expected from the joint business operations strategies and joint service centres currently being piloted, and scaling up their implementation was a priority for 2015. Second, the strengthening of the resident coordinator system must continue. UNDG had already initiated a system-wide cost-sharing arrangement in support of that system in 2014 and was counting on the support of Member States during the forthcoming budget negotiations to ensure that all UNDG members made their full contribution.

4. Implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should be scaled up in three key areas. First, a major breakthrough was needed in development to achieve the eradication of poverty, as well as

significantly reduce inequalities and exclusion, while simultaneously protecting the environment. Many United Nations country teams were already providing support to address the non-income dimensions of poverty, which positioned the Organization well to support the implementation of the sustainable development goals in diverse country contexts. Second, national capacities must be strengthened to advance the sustainable development agenda. In that regard, UNDP had developed quality assurance criteria that ensured the full engagement of national counterparts in design and implementation activities. The tracking and reporting of capacity development, however, needed to improve. Third, South-South and triangular cooperation had been included as a strategic priority in the UNDG work plan for 2015-2016. The newly established UNDG Task Team on South-South Cooperation would guide and support the mainstreaming of such cooperation across UNDG. Some UNDAFs already included South-South cooperation, and the number promoting it was expected to grow. UNDP was also developing a comprehensive strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation to guide scale-up in that area and had undertaken to shield the funding of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation in the event of any budget reductions.

5. Funding for the multilateral system had grown at an average rate of 6 per cent per annum since 2007, primarily driven by increases in earmarked funding. Although earmarked resources allowed the Organization to deliver key interventions at scale and to respond to crises such as the Ebola outbreak, they imposed constraints, including high transaction costs, limited flexibility and the risk of a loss of strategic focus. Core resources were therefore essential since they enabled the United Nations to be strategic and responsive to countries' needs; strengthen accountability, transparency, and oversight; advance coherence and coordination; and provide predictable, differentiated services. A larger and more stable base of core resources and core resource contributors would thus be sought.

6. As to the third question, on the implications of the growing diversity of countries' development experiences for the funds and programmes in the post-2015 era, a universal sustainable development agenda clearly called for a development system that was capable of operating across diverse national contexts and was built around results-based, issue-focused and networked teams that could work with speed, flexibility, and professionalism and add value, irrespective of physical presence and diverse business models. The United Nations development system therefore needed to shift from providing representation to providing expertise; and from having a multitude of country offices in a capital to having a "strength of country team" approach. Technical silos across agencies must be removed, back-office support must be integrated, and risk management and due diligence should be shared. The reform mandate set out in the last quadrennial comprehensive policy review had foreseen those needs, and the focus in 2015 must be on implementing it in full. The 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review must then build on the progress made.

7. **Mr. Lake** (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), panellist, said that processes were important, but results were what mattered. The situation of many had improved, but millions were being left behind. Progress for the most disadvantaged, including children, must therefore be a central focus of the post-2015 agenda. Achieving that progress would require ever greater coherence in the United Nations development system because the challenges were both multiple and interrelated. United Nations agencies would have to work ever more closely together at the global and country levels to support Governments. The current quadrennial comprehensive policy review had improved coherence by enabling agencies to simplify programming approaches and align their global strategic plans with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycle. The standard operating procedures were good in principle and even better in practice. They had provided an excellent opportunity to deliver as one and accelerate results at the country level, as had the MDG Acceleration Framework. For its part, the Monitoring Results for Equity System was helping overcome bottlenecks and making it possible to target the most vulnerable by working with disaggregated data at the subnational level and supporting regular and "real-time" monitoring. The new quadrennial comprehensive policy review should build on those achievements.

8. The current quadrennial comprehensive policy review rightly called on the United Nations to support South-South cooperation, which was not only happening by global design. Countries, Governments, organizations and businesses increasingly gathered around common

causes, such as malnutrition, to share inspiration and best practices. South-South cooperation was also well positioned to help address humanitarian emergencies and build resilience during and beyond crises.

9. Member States were calling for the United Nations not only to maintain a strong focus on delivering results for the most vulnerable, but also to provide technical assistance, policy advice and capacity development support for countries in all contexts, not least middle-income countries. The United Nations development system must respond with approaches tailored to the priorities and circumstances of each country. It was at the country level where the quadrennial comprehensive policy review had been especially significant. It had improved how United Nations agencies worked together, by promoting joint programming; joint messaging and integrated common services; and the development of lighter and strategic results-focused UNDAFs and common budgetary frameworks. The Organization now needed to work harder at forming an agile United Nations workforce that could operate in both development and humanitarian contexts and, especially, attract women, including from the South, in senior leadership positions in United Nations country teams. Greater efforts must be made to break out of the conceptual and bureaucratic boxes separating long-term development programmes and short-term emergency responses. When responding to a humanitarian emergency, every action must be designed with an eye to its longer-term impact, thus also investing in development goals. It was not just a matter of restoring what had been there before, but of putting in place new systems that could improve the well-being of communities today and into the future. In that way, humanitarian response and development could reinforce each other.

10. Finally, people were at the heart of the United Nations' work and must also be at the heart of the new quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Communities must be increasingly involved in discussions and they must be supported in the design and pursuit of their own solutions. They needed the United Nations development system to be fit to deliver on the post-2015 agenda, which promised those who had the least that they would obtain what they needed the most, in other words, results.

11. **Mr. Osotimehin** (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the year 2015 provided a historic opportunity to develop a forward-looking agenda and to capitalize on the demographic dividend generated by the major transformations under way in population structures. 2015 was also the year to build a stronger United Nations development system to partner Member States and national stakeholders. People around the world were calling for equitable and inclusive sustainable development, and the post-2015 agenda must pay priority attention to the rights of women and girls, as well as adolescents and youth, by supporting, empowering and engaging them and investing in their capabilities. The new agenda should also directly address population dynamics, promote sexual and reproductive health and rights and respect cultural diversity, while ensuring sustainable and equitable financing.

12. The current quadrennial comprehensive policy review was a useful starting point for the "fit for purpose" deliberations. The policies it advocated had already produced tangible benefits. Simplified and harmonized business practices and joint procurement initiatives, for example, would result in savings of between $30 million and $60 million for UNFPA starting in 2015. Those funds could now be allocated to preventing millions of unwanted pregnancies or tens of thousands of maternity-related deaths. Common legal and administrative models for purchasing and contracting could be easily developed and applied in other areas as well.

13. The joint operating facility in Brazil was an example of an integrated business model that could be replicated elsewhere. One size would not fit all, but common principles, such as transparency, accountability, results orientation and cost-effectiveness, could be applied to all operations, and there was great potential for savings in information and communications technology, human resources and other common services. Such integrated approaches now needed to be scaled up. The standard operating procedures for countries adopting the "Delivering as one" approach promoted the most effective use of combined experience and skills with a flexible approach that was adapted to country contexts. They should be universally applied to ensure that agencies furthered the integration process and could achieve the most effective results on the ground.

14. Integration would be a prominent element of the new development agenda and must go hand in hand with a human-rights-based approach. Policy and

planning for sustainable development must address both ends of the income and consumption spectrums. Integration across institutional lines would be key, particularly with regard to data issues. As an input for decision-making and accountability, data was a powerful tool for promoting development and greater equity. Measuring progress towards the new sustainable development goals would require the steady flow of timely, high-quality, robust data. UNFPA was working with partners to strengthen national capacities to collect, analyse and use data for development planning, as well as for monitoring and evaluation, and hoped to receive support from Member States for the assistance it provided to Governments in that area.

15. Sustainable development called for a United Nations system whose policies and operational standards could be applied with the flexibility required for differing national contexts. Being fit for purpose meant being able to provide differentiated support in response to the growing diversity of countries' needs. The new business model of UNFPA took into account evolving capacities and changing demands, as well as countries' abilities to finance their development. Preferred modes of engagement with upper middle-income countries, for example, were now the promotion of advocacy, policy dialogue and knowledge management. Such activities required a greater emphasis on policy analysis and diplomacy, as well as more engagement with national partners, in order to invigorate the human rights agenda and empower local communities to demand and facilitate legislative and policy changes. That in turn required the negotiating and consensus-building skills of UNFPA staff to be strengthened.

16. It was to be hoped that Member States, as they deliberated on the development system's longer-term positioning and fitness for purpose, would go beyond the current architecture and look towards building a bolder United Nations that was capable of delivering on its mandate through broader partnerships and of engaging more proactively in the changing development and financial landscape. The hard-won gains recorded in the pursuit of the MDGs over the last 15 years, which were also human rights gains, must be protected; and more could be achieved together, especially for the most vulnerable.

17. **Ms. Puri** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), panellist, said that a number of historic normative processes were under way in 2015, in the fields of climate change, humanitarian assistance, financing for development and disaster risk reduction, as well as in the context of the post-2015 development framework. For the United Nations development system, being fit for purpose meant being able to effectively help Governments to translate international norms into laws, policy and results on the ground, and to achieve the sustainable development goals. Not only data, but also accountability, collaboration with stakeholders and partners and the development of knowledge bases would be essential for ensuring effective monitoring and follow-up. Obtaining the buy-in of all stakeholders was a key new-generation aspect of the system's integration. Ensuring adequate funding for the system, as well as the means of implementation required by countries, would also be vital.

18. UN-Women, having come into being as a result of systemic reform, had adopted an integrated approach from the outset, integrating into its work not only functions, but all United Nations agendas, including the three pillars of sustainable development and human rights. UN-Women fully supported the Rights Up Front Initiative of the Secretary-General as a key driver for advancing the human rights agenda. Achieving full integration across the development system would require real capacity to align agencies' normative, coordination and operational roles. The implementation of the "Delivering as one" model must continue, as must support for resident coordinators and other United Nations leaders in the field, given the centrality of their role. They would need a strong understanding of the interlinkages between the three pillars and the ability to address complex multisectoral challenges coherently and effectively. The UNDG global cost-sharing modality was another step in the right direction. Together with the backbone of resources maintained by UNDP, it gave the resident coordinator system basic resources in a more predictable fashion.

19. Integration also called for innovation, even if that meant more risk-taking. At the global level there were significant opportunities to use existing bodies, including the Commission on the Status of Women, to support and monitor the implementation of the forthcoming sustainable development goals. Inequalities, across countries and within countries, had

not been reduced, and in many cases had deepened. Gender inequality must be prioritized in the new development agenda, including by establishing a stand-alone goal and by accelerating the implementation of related mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. There was no need to create new normative frameworks and commitments; the implementation of existing ones and increased linkages with them would help achieve the sustainable development goals.

20. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP) was an excellent example of partnership, coordination and coherence building. Halfway through its implementation, significant efforts to address institutional limitations to gender mainstreaming had been observed, and there had been a steady increase in the number of UNDAFs that prioritized gender-focused results. The gender scorecards used by country teams were now being reviewed and would be further aligned with UN SWAP. Underinvestment in gender continued to be a huge problem, however, and there was a need to move from performance to results and impact.

21. Progress in key aspects of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review was affected by complex structural issues, including in relation to the functions, funding and governance of the United Nations system. Nonetheless, the commitment of Member States to addressing those issues holistically was encouraging.

22. **Mr. Abdulla** (Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)), panellist, said that the MDGs had been instrumental in spurring unprecedented progress, but poverty reduction had not been inclusive and inequality had increased. Not only had the Goal 1 target of halving the proportion of people who suffered from hunger not been achieved, but most people currently facing food insecurity lived in middle-income countries.

23. A key challenge in the formulation of the post-2015 agenda would therefore be to focus on the most vulnerable populations, wherever they were. That required a greater understanding of the root causes of poverty, hunger, inequality and associated vulnerabilities. WFP had undertaken vulnerability assessment and mapping, which consisted of carrying out tailored analysis with national counterparts and other stakeholders to deepen understanding of a given country's food insecurity and nutrition situation. The mapping work informed all WFP programming and allowed it to provide evidence-based policy advice and improve support for both national Governments and implementing or cooperating partners.

24. In order to leave no one behind, official development assistance (ODA) must be explicitly focused on eradicating poverty and on meeting the needs of the poorest quintile, instead of its current broad mandate of promoting economic development and welfare. The operational activities of the United Nations development system must also get closer to the poorest and most marginalized groups, reaching beyond the capital and major cities, particularly in low-income and fragile countries. Support in middle-income countries should concentrate on building capacity and supporting institutions. The overall focus of development assistance should, however, still be on helping to lift the poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable populations. The standard operating procedures for delivering as one were an effective tool for fostering greater collective understanding of the most critical needs and providing more coherent operational support to address them. The deep field presence and innovative tools of WFP meant it was well placed to serve as a platform for United Nations agencies seeking to enhance their operational outreach.

25. Extreme poverty and chronic hunger were inextricably linked to vulnerability to crises, whether natural disasters, surges in food prices or outbreaks of conflict. The transition from emergency relief to post-crisis recovery and development was rarely linear. Investments in both short-term humanitarian responses and longer-term development must overcome the humanitarian-development divide and better address vulnerabilities to shocks. Emergency responses should aim also to help protect hard-won gains in health, food security and poverty reduction; and development planning should cover improvements to national preparedness and emergency response capacities. The upcoming global deliberations on disaster risk reduction, financing for development, the post-2015 development agenda, climate change and humanitarian affairs represented a once-in-a-generation opportunity to tackle the issue and establish funding policies and frameworks to address the humanitarian-development divide.

26. Eradicating hunger and achieving the sustainable development goals would be impossible unless more resources and additional expertise, skills and capacities

were mobilized. Many developing countries already had pertinent solutions to offer under each of the new goals, and pooling collective expertise and experience should be a priority for all countries, as well as for the international community. The differentiated and voluntary nature of South-South cooperation needed to be embraced as a complement rather than as a substitute for North-South cooperation. All countries, regardless of their stage of development, were able to share relevant experiences that could be tapped in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, in order to develop solutions that were known to work.

27. Working together and building on each other's strengths and competencies was the way forward for the United Nations development system, and integrating the humanitarian and development spheres was the only way to have a lasting impact. A collective effort and a more coherent approach was required. That vision of togetherness and complementarity needed to be built into the Council's dialogues and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. It would be equally important to build sufficient space and flexibility into the system for the Organization's collective responses to be inclusive, contextualized and nimble.

28. **Mr. Carrera Castro** (Guatemala), Chair of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, speaking as discussant, said that the introduction, some 25 years earlier, of human development as an indicator of progress had paved the way for discussion of the MDGs. It was now time for an even more complex programme scope. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review, in defining the scope of United Nations development-related operational activities, should put sustainable development at the forefront, and focus on eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, and preserving the environment.

29. The policy review should also define the major strategies to be promoted by UNDG. In that connection, South-South cooperation would remain vital. There was also scope for South-North cooperation, triangular cooperation and, increasingly, as the international community sought to level the playing field, horizontal cooperation. In aligning the policy review with the post-2015 development agenda, the importance of States' leadership and therefore of national development strategies should be recognized. That implied the strengthening of institutions and the role of States in promoting human development. At the same time, partnerships should continue to be forged with the private sector and civil society. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review should also highlight the role of United Nations development activities in promoting technology transfer.

30. Knowledge-based decision-making was of the utmost importance in overcoming management-related challenges. Means of ensuring universal follow-up and reviewing the situation in every country should also be addressed in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Another challenge was providing for the counter-cyclical funding that was crucial for projects in times of increased need. Such funding would require financial programming, which currently was not available to agencies, funds and programmes, but should be.

31. Looking ahead to the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, UNDG should consider the establishment of common, rather than the current individual, graduation policies regarding the provision of ODA. Moreover, criteria for graduation were outdated, referring almost solely to economic development: in addition to income per capita, they should include the level of inequality within a country and vulnerability to climate change. Graduation policies therefore needed to be revised. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review should clearly set out a policy on domestic resource mobilization in support of United Nations operational activities.

32. It was in the interests of Member States that the United Nations should take on a leadership role in implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Specifically, the policy review should define and strengthen the role of UNDG at the global level and of the resident coordinator system in the field.

33. Member States should consider including the concept of governance in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. It was particularly important to continue discussing ways in which to improve the independent evaluation of all programme and fund activities. Likewise, the role of the Council in the oversight of funds and programmes should be defined and strengthened in the policy review; a political mandate was needed in that regard. Lastly, the resident coordinator system had to be reformed from

the governance standpoint. It should be more directly answerable to the Council, to the Secretary-General and to the agencies, funds and programmes. Discussions should focus on the resident coordinator function as an issue related to governance, not management.

34. **Mr. Al-Hamdani** (Observer for Yemen) requested information on the impact of current inter-Arab cooperation on the Arab region, especially in low-income States, and whether there was cause for optimism in that regard.

35. **Mr. Minami** (Japan) said that in order to foster coherence in development-related operational activities, it was necessary to strengthen existing systems, including by promoting the UNDAF, strengthening the resident coordinator system and expanding the use of standard operating procedures. The post-2015 development agenda differed from the MDGs in that it incorporated environmental, developmental and social priorities. The environmental aspects of the new agenda would likely prove especially challenging given the fragmented nature of the United Nations environmental entities and the ongoing operationalization of the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund. Member States should decide on ways to remedy such fragmentation.

36. Regarding the Ebola outbreak, it would be important to assess the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) as part of an overall lessons-learned exercise, in order to determine what types of mechanisms might be useful in future global humanitarian crises. The point raised by the Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme regarding humanitarian and development-related assistance was a long-standing issue, which Member States should endeavour to resolve as part of the debate on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and post-2015 development agenda. He requested more information on the Crisis Response Unit, recently created by UNDP to deal with the Ebola epidemic, in particular its handling of humanitarian and development assistance.

37. Core funding was essential to strategic management and to an efficient response in crisis situations, but earmarked funding also played a crucial role in operational activities. Many funding issues, including the allocation of funding among agencies, the best approach to funding response efforts in serious humanitarian crises, and provision for counter-cyclical funding, remained unresolved. The World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Istanbul in 2016, would be a prime opportunity for in-depth discussions on such topics. Above all, it was important to adopt a people-centred approach.

38. **Ms. Dávila Dávila** (Colombia) said that implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review would bring about economic benefits and improve the coordination of operational activities. She would welcome updated statistical information on the proportion of core and non-core resources available to agencies, two years after implementation of the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review had begun. It would be interesting to know what measures had been taken to address the imbalance between core and non-core funding.

39. **Mr. Egli** (Switzerland) said that the United Nations system must evolve if the international community was to effectively implement the post-2015 agenda. The resident coordinator function was key to ensuring the coherence necessary to deliver results on the ground. His delegation was therefore concerned that the resident coordinators had called for more coherence at agency headquarters and had reported resistance to delivering as one within some agencies. Resident coordinators had, moreover, asked headquarters to provide guidelines on implementing the recommendations on, inter alia, harmonizing business processes and practices, as contained in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. The mere development of a workplan at headquarters was clearly insufficient: specifics, including detailed timelines, must be established and clearly communicated to United Nations country teams for implementation. He wondered how best to ensure that resident coordinators' voices were heard and asked how UNDG planned to address resident coordinators' concerns in order to better deliver results on the ground.

40. **Mr. Lennartsson** (Sweden) said that there was clear progress in the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. In addition to new strategic frameworks that were better aligned with the policy review, the ongoing strengthening of the resident coordinator system was encouraging, as was the roll-out of the new standard operating procedures.

41. Nevertheless, much remained to be done to improve development outcomes on the ground.

Harmonizing policies, procedures, rules and regulations was a highly complex exercise, but one that held great potential, especially for achieving deeper coherence at country level, reducing the workload of programme countries and country offices, and improving efficiencies. He wondered what steps could be taken to accelerate such harmonization in the two remaining years of the current policy review cycle.

42. Funding had an enormous impact on the effectiveness and flexibility of United Nations development activities. Funding modalities had important implications for the overall predictability, transparency and governance of the entities responsible for carrying out development activities. All Member States in a position to do so should contribute and take responsibility for the collectively agreed funding priorities.

43. Core resources should be distributed according to priority. There was also merit in thematic and pooled resources. It would be useful to know how such instruments could be further developed for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, in a way that supported integrated approaches across the system. It would be interesting, moreover, to understand how differentiated funding modalities might work in practice, also in the broader context of governance.

44. The new development agenda — more ambitious, integrated and complex — would require Member States to look beyond the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. The Council must probe deeper into fundamental issues regarding funding, governance and organizational arrangements, capacity and impact, and partnerships. All United Nations operations should reflect the three pillars of sustainable development, as well as gender equality and human rights. The United Nations development system must be well equipped and flexible enough to adapt its responses to different country settings. Thus it was crucial to listen to programme countries and gain a better understanding of the challenges facing them. Operational activities must be carried out on the basis of well-researched and timely information; more open and common systems for quality data, knowledge and analysis were needed and national capacities should be significantly strengthened in that regard.

45. **Mr. Jawhara** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic), stressing the importance of coherence in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, asked how consistency and coordination in operational activities could best be established, particularly in developing countries that were dealing with exceptional circumstances. Some donors from powerful countries were imposing sanctions on major sectors of society in developing countries, even though the Governments of those donor countries were aware of the impact of such sanctions on the lives of people, especially the poor and women and children, in the recipient countries. He wondered how the United Nations funds and programmes might draw the attention of such Governments to the consequences of their policies on vital sectors of society.

46. **Ms. Franceschi Navarro** (Panama) requested information on the measures that the United Nations development system might adopt internally in order to ensure better results on the ground. Core and non-core resources would be needed to make meaningful changes: assuming that the current lack of coherence and impact on the ground might be linked to insufficient core funding, she asked what strategies were being considered to increase such funding in particular.

47. **Mr. Stokes** (Australia), referring to the Secretary-General's report (A/70/62-E/2015/4), asked for more detailed information on the business operations strategy pilot initiative and on the piloting of the business operations strategy and the joint operations facility in Brazil. He said that such examples were highly encouraging and would provide further insights into options for enhancing coherence in business operations in order to reduce costs and make additional resources available to different programmes. He wondered how soon recommendations based on the cost-benefit analysis of the pilot programmes might be expected.

48. Regarding the role of financing, he asked which funding modalities would best contribute to supporting resilience, peacebuilding and early recovery. Governance should also become part of the debate on those topics. It would be interesting to know whether there was scope in the review of the peacebuilding architecture or other forums for strengthening the United Nations development system's participation in such activities.

49. **Ms. Telles Ribeiro** (Brazil) said that as one of the countries involved in a pilot project on harmonization

and simplification of business processes, Brazil could appreciate the significant progress made in reducing costs and welcomed efforts to make procurement a tool for promoting development. It would be useful to know which activities had the most potential not only for achieving greater transparency in United Nations procurement operations, but also for promoting the goals of the post-2015 development agenda, including poverty eradication, gender empowerment and sustainable development.

50. **Ms. Clark** (Chair, United Nations Development Group (UNDG); and Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), said that it was important to pursue sustainable and environmental development as well as human development goals in the post-2015 development era. National ownership, partnerships with the private sector and civil society, and technology transfer would continue to be important in that endeavour. Current graduation criteria based on income alone distorted the representation of a country's development; there was scope for a more comprehensive view when other criteria such as the human development index were included. UNDG would welcome the Council's strong affirmation that the Group had a global leadership role to play in pursuing the post-2015 development agenda.

51. Evaluation was a useful tool for management to identify ways to improve its work. UNDG would welcome the continued involvement of the Council, alongside the executive boards, in overseeing operational activities. The resident coordinator system was critical in carrying out those activities: consistent with plans to strengthen UNDG, resident coordinator accountability and clear reporting lines would continue to be of the utmost importance.

52. There was cause for much optimism regarding cooperation in the Arab region, where countries ranged from least developed to very high-income status. There was therefore enormous capacity for further solidarity and support within the region.

53. Turning to environmental challenges, she said that the fragmentation of the United Nations system, as referred to by the representative of Japan, did not necessarily affect results on the ground: the United Nations agencies actively engaged at the operational and programme level in country relied on extensive collaboration among themselves to operate effectively. The Green Climate Fund, for its part, should remain a fund, rather than becoming operational and taking on programme-related responsibilities. The Crisis Response Unit, focused on rapid response to crises, would undoubtedly improve the Organization's ability to satisfy urgent needs in future crises.

54. The issue of core and non-core resources was a complex one, and it was important to remember that there were many types of earmarked funding, including high-quality resources that allowed the United Nations development system to operate strategically and with flexibility. UNDP was attempting to document for its Executive Board members the various types of funds and contributions by countries with a view to devising more strategic programmes.

55. Good communication between headquarters and resident coordinators was indeed essential. It was in everyone's interest to finalize the harmonization programme. UNDG and the High-level Committee on Management had agreed on a common plan for harmonization of business practices; they were currently examining the interoperability of the agencies' various platforms.

56. In terms of achieving coherence, she stressed the importance of leadership and the support of all stakeholders in the negotiation of clear partnership framework agreements with Governments. The best way for the United Nations development system to adapt internally in order to achieve better results on the ground was to establish a quadrennial comprehensive policy review that provided clear time frames for response by programmes and agencies.

57. **Ms. Puri** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), said that the current debate should focus on ensuring not only that the United Nations itself was fit for purpose in the post-2015 era, but that it was in a position to support Member States in becoming fit for purpose in that context. As a relatively new, small agency, UN-Women had benefited greatly from coherence at country level. It was thus engaged in joint analysis with country teams, and enjoyed joint leadership and oversight with UNDAF partners.

58. In addition to increasing access to funding, innovative sources of financing should be encouraged. UN-Women was currently awaiting accreditation to become an implementing partner of the Green Climate Fund in order to work with Member States to develop

strategies for empowering women and promoting gender equality in the context of climate action. For a new agency like UN-Women, it was important to focus not only on striking a balance between core and non-core resources, but also on ensuring a critical mass of financing.

59. **Mr. Lake** (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), said that measuring progress primarily through income was indeed outmoded; he hoped that other types of measurement would continue to emerge and that they would be disaggregated, rather than based on national averages, making it simpler to identify inequalities. South-South cooperation was essential, but South-North and horizontal cooperation were increasingly important: South-North cooperation had recently contributed to rebuilding efforts in the United States in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and horizontal cooperation was proving useful in ensuring better child protection in the Commonwealth of Independent States. While it was important to preserve the central role of States, the technology revolution meant that societies were communicating directly among themselves, including though rapid messaging. Civil society and the private sector therefore also needed to be involved in any discussions on development. There were, furthermore, risks involved in centralizing too much the collection of big data, given the speed of technological progress.

60. With regard to the Ebola outbreak, lessons learned included the importance of urgent response, country-level action, and building on development while responding to an emergency. As for core and non-core resources, he noted that UNICEF was increasingly receiving support from individuals in the private sector, which demonstrated the public's support for the provision by Governments of core resources for development. Business models needed to be flexible with regard to country settings. The importance of carrying out development activities even in procurement operations could not be overstated. Lastly, UNICEF strongly supported the resident coordinator system, which, in its programmatic work, guided and oversaw development activities, taking into account the national context.

61. **Mr. Osotimehin** (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), speaking via video link, said that graduation policies should reflect different national contexts and should be negotiated with Member States on a case-by-case basis. UNFPA, like Member States, supported the resident coordinator system and would continue to do so. In carrying out its operational activities, the Organization should adopt a people-centred approach that guaranteed basic human rights; indeed, human rights should be a specific focus of the post-2015 era.

62. The Ebola outbreak had revealed weaknesses in national health systems. Those systems needed to be strengthened, with the involvement of communities. Financing for health should be included in the post-2015 development agenda.

63. Lastly, a sound procurement system and collaboration with countries would go a long way to supporting development. UNFPA was working with the Government of Norway, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and several private sector entities to bring down the price of commodities and thus make them available to more people around the world.

64. **Mr. Abdullah** (Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)) said that coherence was important not just at headquarters, but also throughout the United Nations development system, from concept to delivery through country offices. With regard to funding, predictability and flexibility of application was more important by far than the proportion of core and non-core resources available for programmes. Multi-year funding, for instance, allowed planning for longer-term achievements. Funding modalities should be discussed in greater depth at the third International Conference on Financing for Development; Member States were encouraged to agree on language that would allow for more reliable programme funding. Participants at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015, should focus on the development aspects of disaster risk reduction. Procurement was certainly also important in connection with forging partnerships and ensuring that those who needed support most received it in a timely and cost-effective manner. WFP was working in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and UNDP to help smallholders establish sound agricultural business practices.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.